VRS in ONGC

746. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC has introduced a new VRS to prune its staff strength at least by 10 per cent;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the scheme is available to all employees who are on the rolls of ONGC or whether there is any cut-off mark; and

(d) what measures Government are taking to make the present scheme more attractive?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) had offered a one-time Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in the year 2003. 712 employees of ONGC had opted for VRS then. ONGC intrduced a one-time Voluntary Retirement Scheme again for a period of 2 months with effect from 1.3.2004. The scheme was thereafter extended for a month more i.e. up to 31.5.2004.

The ONGC Voluntary Retirement Scheme applied to all employees, subject to the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) guidelines in force. Employees who had attained the age of 40 years or above, with a minimum 15 years of continuous service in ONGC, were eligible for the scheme. However, employees against whom disciplinary proceedings for major penalties were in progress and/or was contemplated; and/or employees facing charges from external agencies were not eligible.

The scheme offered *ex-gratia* payment equal to 60 days salary for each completed year of service or salary at the time of voluntary retirement, multiplied by the balance months of sevice left before the normal date of retirement on superannuation, whichever is less. Other benefits such as Provident Fund, Cash equivalent of Earned Leave, Encashment of Half Pay Leave as per Corporation's Good Health Reward Scheme as admissible on normal superannuation, Gratuity as per ONGC Death, Retirement and Terminal Grauity Rules 1995, Travel expenses and transfer travelling allowance etc. were also offered for those employees who have opted for the VRS.

About 507 employees of ONGC have opted for VRS under the 1.3.2004-31.5.2004 Scheme taking the total number of ONGC employees who have opted for Voluntary Retirement to 1219.

The Government had annunced a Voluntary Retirement Scheme on 5.10.1988. The Government announced a revised Scheme on 5.5.2000 so as to make it more efficacious having regard to both the interests of the employees and the need to enable Public sector Enterprises to rationalise their surplus manpower. ONGC has implemented its Voluntary Retirement Scheme as per the guidelines of the Government.

Compensations to OMCs

747. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether excise duty reduction on petrol, diesel and cooking gas announced by Government has cost the exchequer Rs. 2938 crores in the remaining part of current financial year;

(b) if so, to what extent marketing companies have been benefited by duty reduction;

(c) whether oil marketing companies (OMCs) still claim that they have not been fully compensated for raising global crude prices; and

(d) if so, to what extent they are bearing the loss and in what manner Government are helping them?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Taking into consideration the prevalent high international oil prices, the oil marketing companies (OMCs) sought to increase the consumer prices of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG and PDS kerosene. However, if the full impact of high international oil prices was passed entirely on to the consumers, it would have meant too much of burden on them. Therefore, the Government decided to share the burden by reducing excise duties on petrol, diesel and LPG. The following reduction was effected in the *ad valorem* excise duty rates on petrol, diesel and LPG effective from 16.6.2004.